

## Chapter 6

# Best Management Practices



Trapping BMPs

*Sustaining the Future of  
Trapping*



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Raccoon

All 50 state fish and wildlife agencies support the development of best management practices

32 state fish and wildlife agencies have been actively involved with the BMP program

Trappers, veterinarians, and university researchers helped wildlife agencies evaluate more than 70 types of traps



**Content Standard** - *Students understand Best Management Practices for Trapping are needed to address animal welfare, trapping efficiency, selectivity, and safety in furbearer management programs*

## Introduction



In 1996, the Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies began a program to develop Best Management Practices (BMPs) for trapping as a way to improve the welfare of captured animals, and to document improvements in trapping technology. This project is one of the most ambitious in the history of the conservation movement.

BMPs are necessary to sustain regulated trapping as a wildlife management tool, and to maintain the integrity of wildlife conservation programs throughout the United States.



**State the name of the organization that coordinates development of best management practices for trapping**

The Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies (AFWA) coordinates the development of BMPs for trapping. AFWA's membership includes all 50 state fish and wildlife management agencies, federal agencies, and conservation organizations.

State furbearer biologists, veterinarians, trappers, and scientists from the University of Georgia and the University of Wyoming cooperated on the development of BMPs. The United States Department of Agriculture provided most of the funding for Trapping BMP research and development.



***Explain that BMPs are based on scientific information and professional experience about current traps and trapping technology***

BMPs are based on the most extensive research effort of animal traps ever conducted in the United States. Traps tested were selected based on knowledge of commonly used traps, previous research, and input from expert trappers.



***Recognize that the Trapping BMP Project is designed to provide wildlife management professionals in the United States with the data necessary to assist in improvements to animal welfare in trapping programs***

Trapping BMPs were developed to give wildlife professionals information they need to improve animal welfare. State fish and wildlife agencies will use BMPs to continue the improvement of trapping systems throughout the United States.



***Recognize that trapping BMPs are intended to be a practical tool for trappers and wildlife biologists to use for decision-making in the field***

Trapping BMPs include recommendations on practices, equipment, and techniques that will provide trappers and wildlife biologists with practical information to use in the field. These recommendations will improve animal welfare, help avoid the unintended capture of other animals, and increase public support for trapping.



***Identify BMP criteria for the evaluation of trapping devices including animal welfare, efficiency, selectivity, practicality, and safety***

BMP traps were evaluated using criteria to measure the effects on animal welfare as well as trapping efficiency, selectivity, practicality, and safety.

**Animal Welfare** - Researchers tested live restraining traps for injuries to

Wildlife veterinarians examined thousands of trapped furbearers for different types of injuries



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More than 150 teams of trappers and technicians participated in field testing

Each state wildlife agency decides how to incorporate Best Management Practices into trapper education and furbearer management programs

BMPs are valuable tools for biologists and trappers

BMP recommended traps resulted in no, little, or moderate injury to at least 70% of the animals trapped

Traps that failed to capture and hold at least 60% of the species targeted did not qualify for recommendation

## Best Management Practices

Traps and sets must be selective

Experienced trappers evaluated cost, ease of use, trap weight, reliability, and other factors



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As new BMP information is published it is distributed by wildlife agencies, AFWA, and trapping associations in print and online

furbearers using two methods. One system evaluated specific injuries, and the other grouped the injuries into categories from mild to severe. BMP approved traps must have a low rate of injuries to the furbearing animals being studied. Recommended traps resulted in moderate, low, or no injury to at least 70% of the animals trapped.

**Efficiency** - Traps meeting BMP criteria must be able to capture and hold at least 60% of the furbearers that spring the trap.

**Selectivity** - Traps must be set and used in a fashion that limits the risk of capturing non-furbearing species while increasing the chances of capturing the desired furbearer.

**Practicality** - Each recommended live restraining trap was evaluated by experienced trappers and wildlife biologists for practicality. Criteria used to measure practicality include cost, ease of use, ease of transport, storage, weight and size, reliability, versatility, and the expected life-span of the trap.

**Safety** - Each recommended live restraining trap was evaluated for safety to the user and other people who might come into contact with the trap.



***Identify where to find detailed BMP information for each furbearer***

State fish and wildlife agencies have access to Trapping BMP publications as they are developed. Trappers can find all current information on Trapping BMPs at the following Web site:

- [www.fishwildlife.org/furbearer.html](http://www.fishwildlife.org/furbearer.html)

The Furbearer Management Web site is maintained by the Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies on behalf of state fish and wildlife agencies, trappers, and trapping organizations.

